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Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

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May 25, 2005

Dear Commissioner Copps,

I am opposed to a mandatory conversion of analog television signals to digital. I am also opposed to any fixed date for such a conversion.

The possibility of a television with a normal antenna that currently picks up news, entertainment, public broadcasting, local emergency information, etc. suddenly showing nothing at the end of 2006 is ridiculous. The wonderful aspect of the history of television broadcasting in the United States has been that any person, rich or poor, could obtain a television, attach an antenna, and receive free over-the-air channels of information, news and entertainment. Now, it appears that certain segments of the U.S. government and marketers of digital consumer electronics seek to end that history of free over-the-air television. That is unless you want to buy their new digital televisions or some kind of digital converter box. What kind of extortion is this? If a person refuses to go along with this or likes the decades old analog system, are they being told they can no longer watch television? How about people who currently own portable televisions? Are you going to tell them that their televisions will be worthless at the end of 2006? Or are you going to tell them to buy a digital converter box and carry it around under their arm just to watch a 2 inch portable television. Do people who have bought portable televisions in the past few years know that their portables, and other TVs that use antennas, are going to be worthless junk metal at the end of 2006? And how about those of us who prefer the older analog televisions? The pictures on these older sets have more warmth and depth than digital televisions. If I prefer older analog televisions, is the FCC telling me I can no longer watch television? Is anybody watching out for the consumer anymore? Also, I apparently will no longer receive timely emergency information or news from my local television station if I do not convert to digital.

What happened to freedom of the airwaves? Since televisions inception any person could put up an antenna and receive television channels. What kind of government forces something on its people that its citizens were not asking for in the first place? Consumers are not demanding or even asking for this digital conversion. Yet it is being forced on consumers without their knowledge. Why is this changeover being forced on the public? So a few digital purveyors can make more money and sell more televisions? Or is it because some members of Congress want a fast, easy source of funds to offset budgeting mistakes? Many people, working in government, say they are for capitalism, freedom and free enterprise and believe in letting the market govern consumers' choices. Yet these same people are forcing upon consumers and broadcasters a choice that they never asked for or demanded. Is no one concerned about the implications of government telling us what we want or taking away something we were perfectly happy with?

Sincerely,

Matthew Taylor
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